

# Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 26 Winter 2004

*The Rangers' would like to thank the Friends, other organisations, volunteers and individuals for all their hard work over the last year. Have a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.*

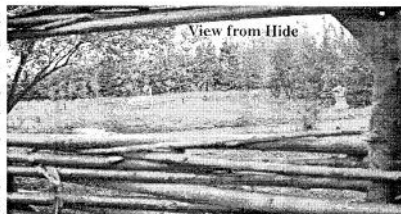


## GIBBIES WOOD

In July a number of tops broke off the Poplar trees and fell onto the footpath. On further investigation they were found to have a bacterial canker that was killing them. In the interest of health and safety we had to close the woodland for 6 weeks and have all the Poplars felled.

So the skyline has changed, the Poplars are gone but Gibbies is OPEN again. Despite this dramatic event, it's not all been doom and gloom, as the rest of the woodland is thriving. A bug hunt by the Wildlife Watch Group, regular flora and fauna identification and the flowering of the wildlife pond has proved Gibbies to be abundant with wildlife.

For those who venture in, you will see the addition of three rustic benches, expertly carved during our wood-carving workshops this summer, by our increasingly talented Volunteers. Placed around the circular path people can now sit and enjoy the peace and quiet and the wildlife therein. The Green Man has returned and rightly stands proud on its new pedestal. Along with directional finger posts so folks can find their way, a 3-sided hide made from willow has been constructed and installed by FORCP. This completes the first stage of the Gibbies Wood Project.



Where the Poplars stood, now offers us new adventures and opportunities. We are well underway in the planning stage with plans for: a new wetland area; restoration of the damaged stone pathway with drainage from the circular path into the wetland scrape to keep the path dry; a nature trail that winds around the area in and out of glade areas; the planting of willow, hazel, oak and sweet chestnut coppice as a sustainable natural resource for the Park; the construction of a log maze and a raised spiral design using the felled poplar and woodchips. Grants will be applied for to fund this next stage project and will allow an expansion to the usability of Gibbies in the future for recreation, conservation and education.

So October and November saw a tidy up of the circular pathway, the woodchip path two thirds upgraded using the timber and woodchips from the felling, surveys done for the next stage, selective coppicing within the existing woodland as part of its normal woodland management, part of the Asher Lane hedgerow laid and a new hedgerow planted along the inside of the fence line.

Well done to all for the achievements so far, thank you for all your hard work and here's to the next stage!

## An Apology

As you may have noticed there was no Autumn edition of the Newsletter; this was due to circumstances beyond our control and we can only offer our apologies. *The Rangers*

## WOODCARVING



The Woodcarving Workshops were a resounding success with very impressive results. The marquees were used to shield workers from blistering sunshine and also heavy rain! Whatever the weather the work went ahead. A few changes were made to species carved, as a slip of a chisel can make a huge difference to the marking on a butterfly!

The three benches - swans, snails and lifecycle of a butterfly are now sited in Gibbies Wood. The Green Man has returned to the woodland with extensions to his beard



Swan Seat



and he is now keeping watch over the pond.

The Totem Pole is a visitor's talking point by the new centre entrance, with families delighting in identifying the animals represented.

All the sculptures have now been treated with teak oil to protect them over winter.

## PARK UPDATE

Since the last Newsletter the builders have left the site and a legacy of their labours has been the finding of three new species of wild flowers on the side of the lake adjacent to the new building - probably from long buried seeds unearthed when the footings were dug.

In total nine new species of wild flowers have been identified including one by Heather (Narrow-Leaved Bird Foot *Tritium*) and one by Hem (Sunflower).

John Randall has also found another 17 species of grasses around the Park, including Canary Grass in the sowing around the new building.

Another dragonfly new to the Park was seen on 13th June - a Hairy Dragonfly, bringing the list to 13 species, and eight new species of moths (to 26th November) brings the total to 58. The last to be identified was very seasonal - Winter Moth!

On to more general topics, 61% more young moorhen were hatched this year as opposed to 2003, as a direct result of the new floating islands and reed blocks. More nesting sites produced 36 young - (22 in 2004).

Buzzard (2) were seen over Gibbies Wood on 1st September and Clouded Yellow were seen on 31st August (1) and 1st September (2). Swallow and Martin movements were also seen on 1st September with >1000 Swallow, >250 House Martin and 30 Sand Martin passing through all day.

On Saturday 11th September the Wildlife Watch Group were pond dipping in the Dragonfly Pond and caught more than 20 juvenile Common Newts, and finally, the male Mute Swan has been often seen attacking its own reflection in the window of the new building.

## WINTER

When cricket gives way to football  
And the sun sinks low in the sky  
The temperature rises  
All insects are out



And you know that the summer's gone by,

The deluge you had in September  
Adds on to the frosts in July  
The cowslips a-flower  
That's twice in an hour!



And there's not a cloud in the sky.

There's a bee flying round. It's November!  
There's a pigeon on eggs. My oh, my!  
Global warming is here  
And December's so near  
So slap on the sun block or die.



## SWAN NEWS

After the loss of four cygnets on 29th May a further disaster struck on 9th June with the disappearance of another. However, the remaining two have survived and are now grown up and taking flying lessons from Mum and Dad.

## REED BUNTING ROOST CATCHING

The Reed Bunting roost catching is now under way again and takes place on Wednesday evenings from 14.00 to roughly 18.00 hours. So far almost 30 have been caught with one individual from two years ago turning up in the roost.

Both catches have so far been in quite mild conditions, so not a huge quantity of birds are present. When the temperature drops to near normal for this time of year larger catches are expected. As Reed Buntings have declined seriously in numbers over the last 25 years, the more we can catch and ring (and the more birds we can catch already wearing rings from previous years) will help us to estimate population size and work out whether there is an increase or decrease.

We will let you know at the end of the roost season.

## BARN OWLS



As reported earlier in the year the Barn owls raised a brood of two in their usual box during the early summer. Imagine our surprise when on checking nest boxes, members of Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project found another brood - this time in a different location. Two more chicks were raised (and ringed) in a box which earlier had been home to a family of kestrels. Both of these chicks had successfully left the nest sometime before 19th November.

## NATURAL HISTORY QUIZ FOR CHRISTMAS



The clues relate to trees, flowers, animals, birds, insects, etc. that may or may not be found in Rushcliffe Country Park, with apologies for spelling.

- 1 This is not an old black Ford \_\_\_\_\_ (4)
- 2 This bovine should watch her footing if she doesn't want to fall over \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
- 3 I wouldn't want to eat this for Christmas, even if it came with maple syrup \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
- 4 The cat wouldn't but maybe the... \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
- 5 He could have been a dapper dresser in *The Wizard of Oz* but he was more of a coward really \_\_\_\_\_ (9)
- 6 Mr Atkinson visits the high hill to search for embers \_\_\_\_\_ (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- 7 Churchill was one; Nelson was; Guy Gibson and Douglas Bader were but don't forget to put an N on the end \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
- 8 A female's embroidered frock \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
- 9 A female's footwear \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
- 10 This bird has such bad habits, it's best kept in the house and only seen 24 times a day \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
- 11 The two main characters in *Great Expectations* said very quickly together, may give you a clue to this furry fly by night \_\_\_\_\_ (11) \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- 12 A book by G.P. Taylor. Forget the wood \_\_\_\_\_ (4)
- 13 Has this little fellow come from a high position in China? When he opens his mouth he sounds like a fake doctor. \_\_\_\_\_ (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (4)
- 14 Some sort of bog jump jet maybe? \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
- 15 This flower may ring to stop the boxing match \_\_\_\_\_ (8)
- 16 This flier is a colourful member of the navy \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
- 17 A regal sportsman on the river bank \_\_\_\_\_ (10)
- 18 In the field there's part of a tall bird \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (10)
- 19 Maybe it's a hunting one and Scotty will bring you up if you ask him properly \_\_\_\_\_ (8)
- 20 At this time of the year it proudly bears its crown in the woods \_\_\_\_\_ (5)



Answers in the next Newsletter. From Enid Barker

### WINTER PROJECTS

...Further hedgelaying is continuing by our volunteers plus BTCV will be coming to carry out hedgelaying on January 12th/18th/19th (anyone wishing to join in please contact the Rangers for further information).

...The planting of a new hedgeline along the length of left side of Weggie Walk.

...Coppicing and thinning in selected woodlands.

...Replacement of vandalised trees in the Memorial Wood with the planting of thorn hedges to edge the area.

...Planning and construction of a log maze in Gibbies Wood.

...Planning, design and construction of various themed trails around the Park.

...Preparation and landscaping around the new Education Centre in readiness for its grand opening mid-late January 2005.

...The planting of a Sea Buck thorn hedge plus 2 gateways around the wind turbines.



### THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

By popular demand the time of volunteer activities will be brought forward to start at **10.00am**.

Meeting time is now **9.30am** onwards for all activities.

### 4X CYCLE TRACK

Proposal plans are being drawn up for the establishment of a 4X cycle track in the woodland behind the Skateboard ramp. Mr Richard Camm (who runs the BMX track at Bulwell) has taken on the task of co-ordinating the ideas, wishes and suggestions of many interested bike riders to make a plan that would be in keeping with the Park's ideals.

An amazing response was given to our initial call for whether a track would be wanted or used if produced. Following a site visit on Saturday 18th September it was felt a 4X track would best suit the terrain and the Park. Fast and furious it would consist of a well-sculptured track of ramps, bumps and tight corners (lay-man's terms!) where 4 riders would compete to be the first down the track. It appears that this type of track would be in great demand and the only one within 50 miles. Interest is there not only to construct the track but also to run a club, coach safe riding skills and maintain the track long-term. As much emphasis will be made on the aesthetics as the quality of the track.

If the council accepts the proposal, and funding found, the track would add to the facilities of the Park. It can offer especially to the young people of the area an outlet of outdoor activity for fitness, social inclusion and good old-fashioned fun.

# Rushcliffe Country Park

## ACTIVITY DAYS

Unless otherwise stated, all volunteer events are free and open to members of FORCP and non-members.

### JANUARY

Sat 8th		Hedgelaying
Wed 12th		Plant a new hedge along Weggie Walk/BTCV Hedgelaying
Thurs 13th		<b>FORCP Meeting - 7.30pm (RCP Classroom)</b>
Sat 15th		Continue planting along Weggie Walk
Tues 18th		BTCV - Hedgelaying
Wed 19th		Hedgelaying/BTCV Hedgelaying
Sat 22nd		Continue planting along Weggie Walk
Wed 26th		Get creative with Clay (RCP Classroom)

Hedgelaying

### FEBRUARY

Wed 2nd		Complete the planting along Weggie Walk
Sat 5th		Selective Coppicing & Thinning/Hedgelaying
Wed 9th		Selective Coppicing & Thinning/Hedgelaying
Thurs 10th		<b>FORCP Committee Meeting - 2.30pm (RCP Classroom)</b>
Wed 16th		Glaze those clay masterpieces & make your mugs! (RCP Classroom)
Sat 19th		Plant replacement trees and hedgerow - Memorial Wood
Wed 23rd		Put your Clay designs together for display (RCP Classroom)

### MARCH

Wed 2nd		Gibbies Wood Log Maze
Sat 5th		Gibbies Wood Log Maze
Wed 9th		Gibbies Wood Log Maze/Spiral Design
Thurs 10th		<b>FORCP AGM Meeting 7.30pm (RCP Classroom)</b>
Sat 12th		Design & make various tree id, map reading & treasure hunt trails
Wed 16th		Repair Willow Structures
Sat 19th		Design & make sensory & tactile trails
Wed 23rd		Early Spring Walk - Wildflower ID

*This symbol denotes the activity is working towards the Notts Biodiversity Action Plan.*

Meet at the Rangers' Office at 9.30 am.

Unless stated all events run from 10.00 am - 3.30 pm.

**Don't forget some lunch, sturdy boots and waterproofs.**

*For more information contact the Rangers' Office 0115 921 5865.*

Produced by the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park  
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